



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ISSUES STATUS REPORT ON ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY EFFORT

The California condor, southern sea otter, the Lee pincushion cactus and the Devil's Hole pupfish are among the 41 percent of the Nation's endangered and threatened species whose populations are stable or increasing, according to a report to Congress recently released by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Program" summarizes the status of the more than 580 Federally endangered or threatened plants and animals in the United States. The report states that 38 percent of listed species are declining, while the exact status of about 19 percent is unknown.

"It is certainly encouraging that the population decline of some endangered and threatened species has been halted," said Service Director John Turner. "A number of these species had fallen to extremely low levels, and many still face multiple, complex problems. It often takes a significant amount of time for these populations to increase to a point where they can be removed from the Endangered Species List."

About 2 percent of the plants and animals listed are believed to be extinct. Determining whether a species is extinct can be difficult, and most in that category likely were extinct

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well before passage of the Endangered Species Act. These species are removed from the list when scientists believe there is no longer any possibility of finding any surviving in the wild.

Of the 581 listed species in the United States, 352 are covered by approved recovery plans, and plans are currently being developed for an additional 130 species. The Service has placed a high priority on development of plans for the remaining 99 species, many of which have only recently been listed. According to the report, those species with recovery plans show a greater tendency for population increases than those without plans.

Recovery plans are practical, working guidelines that outline specific research and management tasks for species recovery. While carrying no legal authority, they can nonetheless provide a "blueprint for recovery" for use by private, Federal, and state agencies in undertaking programs to enhance listed species.

The report also shows that the majority of species considered improving are mammals, birds, or plants; bird and fish species are reported as most stable. Invertebrates, including snails, clams, insects, and crustaceans, are most prevalent among the species whose status is unknown. Freshwater mussels comprise 75 percent of the invertebrates known to be declining.

The report, the first to pull together details on recovery efforts for each listed species, is required under a 1988 amendment to the Endangered Species Act directing the Secretary of the Interior to report to Congress every 2 years on the status of endangered species and recovery plans. This report covers listed species in the United States or its Trust territories under jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior as of October 1, 1990.

Copies of the 400-page report, stock number 024010-00691-9, are available for \$24 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402. Credit card holders may order the report by telephone by calling 202-783-3238.

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Note to Editors: Review copies of the report are available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Current Information, telephone: 202-208-5634.